THE Vanity of Man AT HIS BEST STATE:

IN A

DISCOURSE

ON

PSALM 39. 5.

Preached

At *Kimton* in *Hertford-shire*, June 19. 1673.

AT THE

FUNERAL

OF THE

Honourable and Religious Lady, the Lady

Susanna Keate.

By *RICHARD RIDDER*, M. A.

LONDON,

Printed for *Thomas Parkhurst*, at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns*, near *Mercers* Chappel, at the lower end of *Cheapside*, 1673.

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TO THE

HONOURABLE

Sir Jonathan Keate

KNIGHT and *BARONET.*

SIR,

THis following Discourse (such as it is) does belong to you upon more accounts than one. For as it was at first delivered at your Request, so it is now made publick upon your Command; and besides, as it relates to the memory of her, whom you justly esteemed your greatest earthly blessing and comfort, it does of right belong to you also. I should never have bin tempted to have exposed this trifle to publick View, had not your desire influenced me more then any inclination I had of my own. I am very sensible of the defects of this Discourse,

and that 'tis far short of what such an Argument would have admitted; and the memory of so good a Lady did justly challenge. But still whatever it is, I shall rejoyce, if it either were at the delivery, or shall hereafter be of any use to any man. And if it should be so, the praise will be intirely due to God, and it will not repent the Author that he hath adventured it abroad

I do not desire, by this address, to revive your sorrow, and to give you any new trouble: I would much rather minister to your support, and shall be joyful if I can contribute any thing thereunto. Indeed your affliction is very severe, and God hath been pleased of late to add one sorrow to another, and to make the latest the heaviest also. These things are not joyous, for the present, but grievous; and no man is so able to say how grievous they are as he that bears them. But yet Sir! your condition is so far from being deplorable, that it is preferrible to that of the most prosperous. There is nothing so formidable as a constant prosperity: The World does us the greatest mischief when it smiles upon us. Its blandishments do more hurt to Mankind, than its frowns and menaces ever did: We are then safest when we are under the Rod. Adversity seldom hurts any man, but him whom prosperity had deceived and debauched before. It is happy for us that we meet with troubles. We should be in great

Neminem adversa fortuna commiquit, nisi quem secunda decepit. *Senec. consol. ad Helv.*

danger

danger of eternal Sorrows, did we not meet with temporal ones. There are few Men whom Prosperity does not corrupt, and very many there are whom Afflictions have amended. 'Tis hard to find that man that can bear prosperous things, that can κρατεῖν, μὴ ἐπαίρεσθαι. *But some number there are that bear their Sorrows well. 'Twas the Observation of a wise man,* Qui damna, qui pauperiem, qui exilium, qui carcerem, qui supplicium, qui mortem, & pejores morte graves morbos æquo animo tulerunt, multos vidi: qui divitias, qui honores, qui potentiam, Nullum. *He that prospers hath the hardest task: And 'tis no small labour to bear a condition of worldly plenty and greatness,* Periculosissima est felicitatis intemperantia; *We are in great danger when things succeed prosperously with us.* Petrach. de Remed. Utriusq; fortun. l. 1.

But then on the other hand, our condition is then most hopeful, when our circumstances are least of all desirable to flesh and blood. The greatest of our spiritual attainments are owing to our afflictions. We seldom arrive to any great perfection, unless it be by this Method Ut efficiatur Vir cum curâ dicendus fortiore fato opus est; Non erit illi planum iter, sursum oportet ac deorsum eat, fluctuetur ac navigium in turbido regat. *We gain the greatest wisdom by the Calamities we meet with. By this means we come to know our selves and* Senec. Cur bonis vir. mal. fiant.

and the world better. And therefore I do not wonder that one of the Ancients should say, Nihil mihi videtur infelicius illo, cui nihil unquam evenit adversi. *He is indeed the unhappy man generally that meets with no crosses and troubles in his way. We know that the best of men have met with the worst of things: And the evils they have met with, have been very happy occasions of making them better. But then still it must be our care to make a right use of our troubles, and call in the Divine aid, that they may gain their just end upon us. That God would be pleased to support you under your Sorrows, and turn them to your eternal advantage, shall be the hearty prayer of*

SIR,

Your most faithful and
humble Servant

Richard Kidder.

PSALM

PSALM 39. VERSE 5.

Verily every man at his best state is altogether Vanity.

I Shall not need, I presume, spend any of that time, which is allotted for this Exercise, either in the explication of the Title, or in a nice operose inquiry after the occasion of this Psalm; none of them both (how obvious or useful soever they might otherwise have been) being of any great necessity to the matter in hand.

Whatever the *occasion* of this Psalm were (which probably was the same with that of the 37th and 73d Psalms) the *argument* of it (in which we are principally concerned) is very plain and obvious. We find the Psalmist very thoughtful and musing, full of trouble and un-easiness in the beginning of this Psalm: But his unquiet thoughts at length boil over, and discharge themselves; and he is carried by them into the contemplation of the vanity and shortness of mans life: A most proper consideration this is, and the great *levamen* or ease of our troubled minds. Our troubles here cannot sit very heavy upon us, if we do but look off from Time to Eternity. There is nothing does more alleviate from their uneasiness than this consideration, that they shall not long infest and trouble us. For as the fear of

an:

an end makes our worldly joy leſs, ſo the juſt hopes of an end makes our troubles lighter. The Pſalmiſt is not onely mindful of his *own* frailty in thoſe words, *Behold thou haſt made my dayes as an hand-breadth, and mine age is as nothing before thee*; but of the common lot and condition of mankind in this mortal ſtate. *Verily every man at his beſt ſtate is altogether vanity.*

The words which I have read, have bin thought capable of a different rendring from that which our Engliſh gives them. And ſeveral of the ancient Verſions do render them ſomething otherwiſe, and they do it to ſuch a ſenſe as this: *Surely all is vanity, every man at his beſt ſtate.*

Σύμπασα μὲν πάσης· LXXII. Universa vanitas: Vulg. Lat.

And then for כל which we render *at his beſt ſtate*, it is capable of ſeveral ſenſes and ſignifications: As *ſetled, high, honourable, inveſted with power or vivacious.* But theſe ſeveral ſenſes do not at all diſagree from that ſenſe which our Engliſh gives it here, but rather are ſo many inſtances of that *beſt ſtate* in which man is found in this mortal life. Now according to this explication of the words, the Pſalmiſt hath pronounced all things to be vanity, and particularly man at his beſt ſtate.

V. 1. Sam. 19.20, 22, 9. Cum vers. LXX. Et vulg. lat. in loc.

And this is certainly a great truth: *Solomon* tells us this, *All is vanity*, yea, and ſomething more too, *vexation of ſpirit*, Eccleſ. 1. 1.

Heu quantum eſt in rebus inane!

How empty and vain a thing is every thing under the Sun! This we ſhall quickly find, however we do now ſuffer our ſelves to be cheated and impoſed upon: The things of this World do indeed dazle our eyes, they ſeem gay and brave to them that ſee afar off. But they are like the Apples of *Sodom*, that made a goodly ſhew to the eye, but he that touched them would ſoon find

them

them consuming into smoak. Or like the fair Temples of the *Egyptians* (which we read of) which had *large* and *fair Porches*, and had *Ministers* belonging to them that were very *Ceremonious* in their *Service*, and one would have thought some great *Deity* had dwelt in them; But he that entred, found that they worshipped a *Cat*, a *Goat*, or *Dog*, or some such pitiful and inconsiderable Creature. Riches and honour and pleasure, the mirth and beauty, the power and gaiety and splendor of this World, these things make a great noise, but they are but an empty sound, and nothing else. They are but empty nothings, as they will tell us (who are soonest to be believed) that have tried and found them so. But I shall not need to enlarge upon this Argument, as being neither the certain meaning and design of my words (especially if it be considered how they are accented in the Hebrew Text) nor yet so emphatically agreeable to the sad occasion that hath brought us together at this time. I shall therefore return to the words as they lie in our English Translation, *Verily every man—*.

Origen Contr. Celf. l. 3.

The words are greatly Emphatical: The Psalmist does not onely tell us that Mankind is vain, which diminution might justly have humbled us, but he tells us much more then this amounts to:

First, That *every man* is so: Rich and poor, High and low, Noble and obscure, Strong and weak.

Secondly, That he is so at all times also; when they are in their best and fairest circumstances; when the Strong is at his greatest strength; when the Rich is arrived to his greatest abundance; the Honourable at the highest pitch of preferment. In a word, not onely *every man*, but every man at his *best state* also. Nor is this all he sayes; He does not onely pronounce them *vain*, But

Thirdly, *Vanity* in the abſtract: And yet ſtill, as if all this had been too little, and as if he had not ſufficiently depreſſed humane nature, he tells that they are

Fourthly, *Altogether vanity.*

A teeming expreſſion it is: That man (the maſter and higheſt of all Gods Creatures in this lower World) that all men, even of the higheſt rank and quality; and that at all times, even when they are exalted to their higheſt pitch; and for all that, they ſhould be not onely *vain*, but *vanity*, yea *altogether vanity. Every man at his beſt ſtate*, &c.

This is to be underſtood with reference to mans mortal condition, of which the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks in this Pſalm. This mortal, frail condition is but a ſtate of vanity: We are indeed ſome of us more ſtrong, rich and gay then others, but yet at our beſt ſtate we are altogether Vanity. All the Sons of *Adam* are ſo many Vanities; And in this are like one of the firſt and beſt of his Sons. For *Adam* had two Sons at the beginning of the World, and the beſt of the two was *Abel*, that is, in the very word of my Text הֶבֶל which ſignifies (as it is here tranſlated) *vanity*; A fair intimation that the beſt of the Sons of *Adam* are but vanity, and in the words of my Text כל־הבל altogether vanity. For my better proceeding, I ſhall

First, Place man, in this his mortal condition and ſtate, in his beſt and faireſt circumſtances: I ſhall ſhew him at the beſt.

Secondly, I ſhall, as I go along, ſhew that even in this beſt ſtate he is altogether vanity.

Thirdly, I ſhall make ſome uſe of it.

First, I ſhall ſhew you Man at his beſt ſtate, repreſent him at the beſt and greateſt advantage, conſider him as having the greateſt ſhare of the good things of this World. And they are the *Bona animi, corporis, & fortunæ.*

1. For

1. For the *Bonæ fortuna*: Men do indeed generally put a great value upon these things. Let us then suppose a man possessed of the greatest Plenty, descended of the most ancient Blood, raised to the highest pitch of Honour, vested with the greatest Dignities and Properties, let him be higher by the head and shoulders, in these respects then his Neighbours and Relatives: Let him stand among Princes, and not among mean men; Or rather let him sit in the Gates of his own people: His inferiors shall bow and cringe to him, and not onely pay him an outward homage, but an inward reverence also. In a word, let him be as big as the world can make him, and as high as it can lift him up: Yet we shall soon find, if we put him into the ballance, he will like *Belshazzar* (*Dan.* 5. 25.) be found too light. And the words of the Psalmist will be verified, That as *men of low degree are vanity*, so these *men of high degree are a lye*: and, *to be laid in the ballance they are altogether lighter then vanity*, Psal. 62. 9. All this will be but πολλὴ φαντασία, an empty semblance, a painted nothing. For, "1.) All these things are but forreign and extrinsecal, "and do not at all settle us in a state of perfection and "happiness. 'Tis all but ἀλλότριον προτέρημα, Here's nothing "we can call our own: We are dressed up gayly and "splendidly, but this does not alter our condition, "nor advance our natures at all. And therefore if we "be mortal and vain by Nature, 'tis not any dress or "art that makes a change. We are but of the same "mould and constitution still: And the most that "riches and honour do, is, that they make us *forget* "our frailty; it is certain that they cannot *cure* it. "These things add nothing to us at all: No more then "rich furniture and trappings do to an Horse, whose "nature they do not change, though they may serve "to hide some of his faults. These things are so far

"from adding to us, that they do not make us the
"more praise-worthy. They are not so much our
"own, as to contribute any thing to our just praises.
"Those things are onely good which make us so:
"None of these things are that *Bonum quo nos boni*
"*jumus*. These things may be imputed rather to
"*chance* then to our *vertue*: It was our *lot* and not
"our *choice* that we were born of ancient blood. And
"we are beholden to others for these things; and if
"all should demand their own, and withdraw from
"us what is not properly ours, we should be left na-
"ked; and then it would appear that we are vanity,
"yea altogether vanity. Were we stripped of these
"things, we should be very inconsiderable and ridi-
"culous.

Define tuum nomen alienis obumbrare virtutibus, nè unoquoq; suum reposcente nudus ipse de proprio rideare. *Petrarcha.*

2.) It is but little that one man can be said properly to enjoy and use. The desires of nature are but narrow, its needs are few, and its satisfactions are therefore easily attainable. What a man hath a Title to and cannot use, is not to be valued: Our beings are minute and small, and therefore our enjoyments cannot be great. What we have and use not is many times as much another mans as ours: He that hath enough hath as much as he that hath the greatest store. What is over and above is alwayes needless, and many times a cumber and burden to us: Neither the life nor happiness of a man consists in the abundance of the things which he does enjoy. Abundance is so far from making us happy, that it many times makes us solicitous and miserable. It is generally accompanied with greater cares, and with much envy, and alwayes renders us liable to a greater and more severe account hereafter.

3.) Such a man is infinitely uncertain how soon he may be taken away from all his store and glory: *Man being*

ing in honour abideth not: He is like the beasts that periſh, Pſal. 49. 12. None of theſe things will exempt him from the ſurprize of death. *He hath no power in the day of death*, Eccleſ. 8. 8. His greatneſs ſhall be no preſervative to him. And death will *bereave* him of his *ſtore*, *ſtrip* him of his *properties*, and lay his *glory* in the *duſt*: And then he ſhall be as vile as his poor Neighbour, and laid up in the ſame duſt with him: He that does ſeriouſly think of death, will very eaſily pronounce all the glory of this World to be altogether vanity. A little time will make us all alike, and no man will be able to diſcern the difference between the duſt of the greateſt Prince and the pooreſt Peaſant. One of the Ancients diſſwaded a certain man from covetouſneſs, by meaſuring with his Lance the extent of a grave, and then telling him, That that was all he ſhould have when he was dead. And we are told that it was the cuſtom in the Empire of the Eaſt, that when the Emperour received his Imperial Crown, and as he ſate upon his Throne of State, there came a man to him with ſeveral ſorts of ſtones, to the intent he might make his choice of what ſort he liked beſt for his funeral Monument: And a fair admonition it was of the vanity of all his glory. So it is, We are gone in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye: This is true of Man at his beſt ſtate; and no wonder, for all things are paſſing away: *The faſhion of this world paſſeth away*, 2 Cor. 7.

V. Camerar. Oper. ſubc. Cent. 1. c. 12.

4.) He cannot be certain but that he may out-live all his glory: He knows nothing of the World that will deny that is a thing which may be ſuppoſed: Many have fallen from great glory into as great contempt. And we cannot tell what ſhall be upon the Earth. The rich man's plenty may take the wing and fly away before him: The Apoſtle adviſes the rich man not to

truſt

truſt πλούτου ἀδηλότητι, *upon the uncertainty of riches*, 1 Tim. 6. 17. In the Triumphs of *Rome* an Executioner with his whip attended upon the Victor when he was in his triumphal Chariot, to put him in mind that he might poſſibly live to fall from his glory into diſgrace and miſery. And we read of *Seſoſtris* the *Egyptian* King, when he was drawn in his Chariot by four Captive Princes, that he obſerved that one of the Captives looked often back upon the wheel of the Chariot, and when the King would needs know the reaſon why he looked back ſo much: He told him, That when he ſaw the wheel turn round, and the upper parts of it ſo ſuddenly to become the lower, he could not but meditate on his own condition, who from a *Prince* was ſo ſoon become a *Captive*. So very uncertain and unſtable is the beſt ſtate of man.

5.) He cannot be ſatisfied with all theſe things: *He that loveth ſilver ſhall not be ſatisfied with ſilver, nor he that loveth abundance with increaſe*, Eccleſ. 5. 10. He may poſſeſs much, but his Soul will be empty ſtill. Our Soul was made for greater ends and purpoſes, and will never be at reſt till it attain at the great end of its creation: Nothing but God, that center of reſt and happineſs, will be able to quiet and content it. Our luſts are like the Horſe-leaches daughters that alwayes cry *give, give*; like the grave, and like the barren womb, that never ſay it is enough. *Subdued* they may be indeed by the *grace* of *God*, but never *ſatisfied* with all the *Careſſes* of this *World*. When *Xerxes* had propounded a Reward to him that ſhould find out a new Pleaſure, we are told, that when it was done, and he had made the trial of it, he was not ſatisfied with it: For luſt is alwayes craving, and never filled. There's nothing in this world will give us reſt; He alone that made the Soul can make it happy alſo.

How

How vain then are all the things of this world! how very trifling and inconsiderable! They add nothing to us at all, are so far from making us better, that they frequently leave us worse. 'Tis but *little* we can enjoy of them *here*, and *nothing* that we can carry of them *hence*. And that little which we do enjoy, we may be deprived of the next moment, and are sure that we cannot enjoy it long. And still, while we do enjoy it, it gives us no solid joy, no true satisfaction, but rather clogs and offends us, burdens us with care, contracts us envy, and enhanses our accounts at that great and terrible day. Certainly then these things are vanity, they are altogether vanity.

2. For the *Bona corporis*: Let us suppose a man in his youth and strength, vivacious and sprightly, of a firm health and habit of body: Let him be comely and beautiful, of an excellent contexture and constitution: Suppose him at once active and strong. In a word, let him be as happy in these things as he can reasonably be supposed to be; yet if we put such a man as this into the ballance, he is altogether vanity. The wise man hath told us, That *favour is deceitful and beauty is vain*, Prov. 31. 30. And else-where, that *Child-hood and Youth are vanity*, Eccles. 11. 10. For,

1.) This mans strength is but limited and bounded; compared with God he is not strong. *If we speak of strength, loe he is strong*, Job 9. 4. *The weakness of God is stronger than men*, 1 Cor. 1. 25. It is so far from being strength, that it is impotency and weakness. It is true of every Creature, that its *non esse* is more than its *esse*: There is much that it is not, very little that it is. Its bounds are limited and narrow, and it stands in a nearer Neighbourhood to nothing than to all things, and to an infinite being. God is infinite in power, and in compare with him our greatest strength

is nothing at all: For as the Pſalmiſt ſayes of his age, *Mine age is nothing before thee* (or, *in reſpect of thee*, as the old tranſlation hath it:) So certain it is that our ſtrength is nothing to his Almighty Power. But beſides, many of the Beaſts do excel us in theſe bodily gifts: who can pretend to the ſtrength of an Horſe, the ſwiftneſs of a Roe, the heart of a Lyon, the eye of an Eagle, the quick ſenſe and ſagacity of other inferior Creatures? Again, who is beautiful as the Lilly of the field? who is ruddy as the Roſe, gay as the Flower that is fading away? We are ſtrong; but amongſt whom? among our Companions and fellow Creatures: So is the Ant and the Bee, thoſe little animals excel one another in ſtrength. And yet a man can ſoon deſtroy thouſands of the ſtrongeſt of thoſe little Creatures: And ſo can God more eaſily do by us: He can in a moment cruſh our ſtrength, and turn us all back again into nothing, or tumble us into Hell. A word of his mouth ſends us back to our long home. "Our ſtrength is ſmall at beſt, "and whatever it is, yet it is but lent us, and we intire-"ly depend upon God for it. We have nothing to "boaſt of upon this account: no more then the leaſt "and moſt inconſiderable animals that are; As 'tis "but *little* that we *are*, if compared with the *much* "which we *are not*; ſo it is very *little* that we are able "*to do*, compared with the *very many things* which are "*above our power*.

"2.) He knows not how ſoon his beauty and "ſtrength may fail him. A little time will wear "away his ſtrength, and deface his beauty. And 'twill "be as impoſſible for him to ſtop this decay of his "beauty and ſtrength, as it is impoſſible to make time "ſtand ſtill. *Siſte, ſi potes, tempus; poterit forſan & forma conſiſtere.* How ſoon may his marrow be dryed up by ſorrow or by ſickneſs; *when God with rebukes does*

does correct man for Iniquity, he makes his beauty to consume away like a moth. And then 'tis worth our observing what the Pſalmiſt adds or infers there-from, *Surely every man is vanity*, verſ. 11. Thy fair face may ſoon be ſcorched and diſcoloured by a Feavor, thy ſmooth skin may ſoon be ploughed up by a noiſome Diſeaſe: A little ſickneſs will abate thy ſtrength, and ſpoil thy activity: Death however, as tall as thou art, will reach thee and pull thee down: And thou knoweſt not how ſoon that may ſurprize thee. For what thou knoweſt it may be in the greateſt of thy ſtrength, and the moſt flouriſhing of thy dayes.

3.) However old age (which ſteals on us apace) will decay our ſtrength, and wither away our beauty, if we ſhould not before that time be deprived of them. And old age is a never failing and incurable Diſeaſe, though we ſhould eſcape a more early arreſt. "We "are growing old apace, and then we ſhall not know "our ſelves in a Glaſs, ſo great will the change be. "And 'twas therefore wiſely ſaid by one, *Quicquid es "non eris diu, & ſi eſſe cupis, curant ſis bonus: Senium "virtus ſola non metuit.* What we are now we ſhall "not long be, and therefore it is adviſable, if we "would continue to be, to be careful that we be good: "True vertue and goodneſs fear not old age. The "Body will decay, and when 'tis moſt ſtrong, the Soul "is the weaker for it; But he that does the will of "God ſhall endure for ever.

Vanum eſt autem cum ipſe ſis fragilis, forti habitaculo (dicam meliùs) forti adverſâ viogloriari. *Petrarch.*

And is not that ſtrength of body which is in it ſelf ſo ſmall, and to us ſo very uncertain, and yet ſo unavoidably making haſte from us, (beſides that it clogs and weakens our Soul when it is at its greateſt ſtrength) is it not vanity, yea *altogether vanity?*

3. For the *Bona animi:* We will ſuppoſe a man to be of great underſtanding, of more then ordinary

capacity, of a quick wit, of a piercing judgment, of a faithful memory with a deep and comprehenſive reach: Suppoſe he have made great acquiſitions, and that he be as wiſe and prudent as he is learned. In a word, let us ſuppoſe him as conſiderable for Learning and for Wiſdom alſo as we can reaſonably imagine him to be: And then let us put this *learned weight* into the ballance, and we ſhall find him to be *altogether vanity*. And however he may make a little more noiſe then others do, yet he is but as a ſounding Braſs, and as a tinkling Cymbal. *The Lord knows the thoughts of the wiſe, that they are vain*, 1 Cor. 3. 20. For,

1.) His Wiſdom and Learning will not keep him from the Grave. *We ſee that wiſe men die*, ſayes the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 49. 10. Death robs him of all his acquiſitions, of the fruit of all his time and labour. His great abilities fall with him: nor can he charm off death, let him charm never ſo wiſely: And he that was ſo long in treaſuring up his curious notions, falls of a ſudden, and all his learning and thoughts periſh at once. His Wiſdom is ſo far from being able to ſave him from Death, that it reſcues him not from the fit of an Ague, the flames of a Feavor; or the tortures of the Stone and Gout.

2.) Beſides, though Wiſdom be better than Folly, yet hath it alſo more of ſorrow and trouble that does attend it. He that knows moſt, hath generally moſt of ſorrow alſo: A drowſie Ignorance hath more of eaſe then the deepeſt Learning and the greateſt Knowlege. He that knows much, hath moſt of impatient thriſt after Knowledge, moſt of objection and diſpute in his mind, moſt of irreſolution and doubtful queſtioning within himſelf: A craſſe Ignorance ſaves us that trouble. There is a labour in getting Knowledge; *Much ſtudy is a wearineſs to the Fleſh*, Eccleſ. 12. 12. And

there

there is a trouble too, when we have gotten it, that does attend it: *In much wiſdom is much grief, and he that increaſeth knowledge increaſeth ſorrow*, Eccleſ. 1. 17, 18.

"And if we remember many things, amongſt thoſe "many there muſt be ſome that are troubleſome and a "diſquiet to us: And the memory of them is ſo far "from making us happy, that it contributes to our "ſorrow and grief. 'Twere well for us that we could "forget many of thoſe things which we remember "to our great diſquiet. When one offered *Themiſto-"cles* the art of memory which *Simonides* had found "out at that time, he told him, *He had rather have "the art of forgetting.* There are many things we were "much better unlearn and forget: So far are theſe "things from exempting us from being *altogether "Vanity.*

3.) This Knowledge will be but ſhort and imperfect at beſt: *We know but in part*, 1 Cor. 13. We know but little, compared with what God knows, who knows all things: He is Omniſcient as well as Omnipotent. And as our ſtrength compared to his Power is weakneſs, ſo our Knowledge in reſpect to His is but ignorance and folly; nay our Knowledge is but little if compared with what the Devil knows, or with what we are ignorant of. And many times 'tis but little to what we might have known, and alwayes ſo it is if compared with that which we are ignorant of: And very often it is ſhort of that which our fellow Creatures have attained unto. What ever it is, it is ſhort and imperfect at beſt. "And he that thinks he knows "any thing, knows nothing yet as he ought to "know: And he that knows the moſt, is generally "the moſt ſenſible of his own ignorance and imper-"fection.

And certainly that which is so ineffectual and unserviceable, that which hath so much of labour and vexation in it, and after all, is so very short and imperfect, will not rescue us from being what the Psalmist affirms of every man in his best state, *altogether vanity*.

I proceed now to make some Use of what hath been said.

1. Let us not then be envious at the Prosperity of the Wicked, who have their portion of good things in this present life: They may rather be the object of our *pity* and *compassion*, then of our *envy*. Let the wicked man prosper and thrive; *When he dyeth, he shall carry nothing with him: though whiles he lived, he blessed his soul*, Psal. 49. 16, 17. He receives all his good things in this life, and hath nothing in reversion, but an eternal sorrow. And that is not far from him, for *he shall soon be cut down as the grass, and wither as the green herb*, Psal. 37. 2.

2. This may teach the best and greatest of us humility and moderation. What art thou, O man, that thou swellest and lookest big? Dust and a shadow, the very dream of a shadow; vanity, and lighter than vanity. What is thy life? It is but a vapour, 'tis but *spes & formido futuri*. We have no reason (did we well consider it) to strut and carry it so high: We are but as the grass, and as the flower that have their root alwayes in the grave. Why should we be proud and scornful, and disdain one another, are we better than other men? Be it so, yet we are the Sons of *Adam* still, and they are *altogether vanity*. The Sun indeed is a glorious Creature, arrayed with light and with strength, and with a strong man rejoyces to run its course; It is greatly useful and beneficial to this lower world. But what are we? our sphere is little, our motion slow, and many times irregular, and our usefulness

neſs inconſiderable. *When I conſider thy Heavens, the work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars which thou haſt ordained: What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man thou viſiteſt him?* Pſal. 8. 3, 4. Let us then know our ſelves, and not exalt our ſelves above our Brother, nor oppreſs him.

3. Then ſhall we not need to be greatly diſmayed and aſtoniſhed at the death of our Friends and neareſt Relatives; no, not although they be taken away in their youth and ſtrength; for Man at his beſt ſtate is *altogether vanity.* So my Text tells us, and ſo doth daily experience alſo, and particularly the ſad example before us proclaims it loudly: If we be alwayes mortal, no wonder that we ſhould die daily. We have a ſtory in our Books of one, who, when he heard of the death of his Son, replyed; *Ego, cum genui, tum moriturum ſcivi.* He knew that his Son was mortal, and therefore needed not to wonder at his death at all. *Quid enim eſt novi, hominem mori, cujus tota vita nihil aliud quam ad mortem iter eſt?* We are alwayes in our journey towards death, and no wonder then that we ſhould die. *Senec.* Conſol. ad Polybium.

Nor ſhall we have reaſon to be greatly caſt down: It will not become us to mourn as thoſe that are without hope. God takes away our Children and neareſt Relatives to our grief indeed, but many times to our great advantage, and to theirs alſo. Let us then quietly reſtore what God hath lent, and not think that He hath called for them before their time; who never gave us any promiſe that we ſhould enjoy them ſo long. We could not be ignorant that they were given with this condition, that God might demand them back when he pleaſed: Let us not murmur againſt the Divine will. "*Seneca* tells us of one *Demetrius*, a moſt coura-
"gious man, that he heard him ſay; *Hoc unum*, &c.
"ſayes

"ſayes he, I have but one thing to complain of the im-
"mortal Gods for, that they did not ſooner let me
"know their mind: For, ſayes he, I would ſooner
"have come to thoſe things to which I am now called.
"*Vultis liberos*, &c. If ye would have my Children
"(ſayes he) I have them for you: If any part of my
"Body, I will ſoon reſign it all: If my Spirit, I will
"quickly give up what you have beſtowed. *A volen-*
"*te feretis, quicquid petieritis*; Ye ſhall have willingly
"what ever ye deſire. Let us then be aſhamed to
murmur and complain, when God lets us know his
will: Let us rather imitate the Pſalmiſt, *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it*, verſ. 9.

4. Let us not then truſt in any Creature: Not in Man, though at his beſt ſtate: Not in our Riches and Proſperity. Nay, we have great reaſon to be ſuſpitious and jealous of our worldly greatneſs, and our uninterrupted Proſperity: It is many times a bad *Omen*, and boades us very ill. There's too often a poyſon lying under this fair Herb. We pity them that are afflicted, when they need our pity moſt, that meet with nothing but Proſperity. *We count them happy that endure*, ſayes St. *James*, Chap. 5. verſ. 11. But he no where tells us, that the proſperous are accounted ſo. God ſees it needful for us that we ſhould meet with Afflictions, and they are a ſign too that we are not Baſtards, but Sons. The greateſt Plague which we can meet with, is to meet with none at all: Conſtant Proſperity we may juſtly ſuſpect and be ſhie of. *Let the brother of low degree rejoyce in that he is exalted*, James 1. 9. Proſperity is no certain token of Gods love; but ſo is a ſanctified, though ſevere, affliction. We may fear, when we proſper, that we ſhall receive our good things in this life, and that there is a great ſorrow remaining us. It ſeems to intimate ſome ſuch thing: We

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may not expect two Heavens: We shall meet with sorrow sooner or later. We read of one *Gidarescus*, that at his Birth-day festival, at the height of his Honour and Greatness, He asked his Friend, that saw the splendor of the day, What he thought was wanting: His Friend told him, what he soon found true; *Ira numinis procul diũq; à tàm secundis rebus abesse non potest*; i. e. That Gods displeasure could not be far off from so great a Prosperity. *Plutarch* tells us, That when *Philip* King of *Macedon* had the News brought him at once of the success of his Army, and of his Victory at the Olympick Games, and of the birth of his Son; besides, that when he heard these tydings, he lift up his hands to Heaven, and cryed out, Ὦ δαῖμον μέτριόν τι τούτοις ἀντίθες ἐλάττωμα. So sure a presage did he think his great Prosperity to be of some future Calamity, that he prayed for a gentle Affliction, after so much good News. Let us not then trust to that which we have so much reason to suspect.

V. *Plutarch.* Consol. ad Apollon.

5. Let us then be perswaded to put our whole trust and confidence in God: There's nothing in this world to be confided in. We are but foolishly confident, if our confidence be not placed in God. Let us then learn that from verse 6. which the Psalmist does verse 7. *Surely* (sayes he) *every man walketh in a vain shew: Surely they are disquieted in vain: He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.* But then he adds in the next words, which is the use we ought to make of this: *And now Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.* 'Tis bnt just that we should do thus: The vanity of the World should send us home to God, in whom is all fulness, and all perfections. 'Tis very just and reasonable we should do this, and greatly for our interest also. We have daily experience of the vanity and emptiness, and uncertainty of all things;

Omnis magna securitas, nisi quæ de Deo oritur, Stulta est.

we

we may ſoon ſee an end of all perfection: Let us then with all our Souls draw nigh to God, who is the ſourſe of all Good, the onely center of Reſt, the onely eternal and unchangeable Being: What is there in this World to betwich us? what is there that is worth our ſtudy and purſuit? If there be any thing which we fondly love, it ſoons flyes from us and leaves us miſerable. Whether ſhall we turn then but unto God with all the bent and intention of our Souls: Let us take words in our mouths and return to him. Let us ſay,

Lord! I have examined the whole Creation, and find nothing there that I can reſt upon: There's nothing that I can eſpy that is worthy of my love and confidence. I find nothing that is durable and laſting, that will ſatisfie and quiet my mind; much leſs that can ſtand me in ſtead when I ſhall moſt need ſupport, when I lie a dying. Suffer me not to be bewitched with any of theſe vain and empty things; Let me not ſet my heart upon that which is not. But draw me to thy Divine Majeſty: For whether ſhould I go but unto thee, thou infinite and eternal being; Thou alone haſt the words of eternal life. Unite my heart to love and fear thee: Help me, that I may put my intire truſt and confidence in thee: That I may be able to ſay, that there is none in Heaven but thee, nor any thing in the Earth that I can deſire beſides thee.

How happy ſhall we be, if we do this with all our heart: happy indeed, what ever affliction or diſappointment gave us the occaſion. We ſhall have reaſon to bleſs God, from the bottom of our hearts, for the ſorrows that befal us; for the ſharpeſt and ſevereſt trials that we meet with, if they be an happy occaſion of ſending us home to our God. *For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield; the Lord will give Grace and Glory: no*

good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee, Psal. 84. 11, 12.

It will now be expected (and I deny not but that it justly may) that, having done with my Text, I should speak something of the Person upon whose account we are met together this day. And though I am no admirer of Funeral *Encomiums*, and know very well that as they never add any thing to the dead, so they are generally suspected by the living. Yet, however, I think it but just to speak honourably of those who have deserved very well; and then 'tis also very seasonable to do it, when it may minister to the instruction and advantage of the living.

But here I lie under a double disadvantage: For I am to speak of a person of whom I had but very little knowledge, and besides, that of one who was a Person of that humility and reservation, that she did conceal and hide that good which would else have been more visible and conspicuous. This I premise, that my speaking so little of her may not be interpreted to her disadvantage (of whom, as I am told by one that knew her long, that I could not say too much) but to my ignorance, and her great humility and self-denial.

What I have therefore to say of her, I have received from those who knew her well and long, and such as may be presumed to be very competent Witnesses in the Case.

I shall not need to tell you that she was of a very ancient and honourable Family in this County: That is a thing well known to you. "Otherwise it were "not hard to say very much upon this *Theme*, and to "suggest those things touching her ancient and "honourable Extraction, which would be very re-"markable, and by some thought very valuable also.

But it may be ſaid by others, that it not being a matter of her choice, nor yet of it ſelf any vertue or perfection; that though theſe things might be *truly* ſpoken, yet not ſo *pertinently* to the matter in hand. But yet ſurely it is not onely a thing very deſirable for its *conſequents* and *influence*, but alſo in *it ſelf* very commendable to be *Good* and *Great* at once. Thoſe that are Great have many temptations not to be Good, and upon that account their Goodneſs is not onely more conſpicuous, but more laudable and rewardable alſo. And it is then ſo eſpecially, when true Vertue and Goodneſs is become the ſcorn of many of thoſe who are great in the World: and Religion it ſelf is not looked upon as faſhionable and gentile, but rather as a ſneaking and unbecoming thing. Upon theſe accounts I think it no little commendation to thoſe that are Great and Honourable, that they are Vertuous and Religious alſo. That they dare own the Religion of Jeſus Chriſt, when it is generally deſpiſed and ſpoken againſt.

But ſhe was a pious and devout Perſon: This is that which is indeed valuable and worthy, and that adds a greater luſtre to any Perſon than worldly Titles and ancient Deſcent can do. This does truly ennoble our Souls; and there is nothing reflects a greater ſplendor upon them, then the approximation to the Divine nature and likeneſs: This ſtamps an impreſſion of honour upon them: Βάπτεται ὑπὸ τῶν φαντασιῶν ἡ ψυχή. The Soul is tinged and imbued according as it imployes it ſelf: It receives a great impreſſion from that which it moſt of all loves and converſes with. Of the *Bereans* 'tis ſaid, That they *were more noble then thoſe in* Theſſalonica, *in that they received the Word with all readineſs of mind: and ſearched the Scriptures daily whether thoſe things were ſo*, Acts 17. 11. And not to ſpeak of the other

Devo-

Devotions of this deceaſed Lady, in Publick and in Private (for ſhe kept her conſtant times for her Devotions) it was particularly obſerved of her, that ſhe was a conſtant Reader of the holy Scriptures.

And next to her Piety towards God, I muſt not forget her very exemplary Charity towards her Neighbour; which ſhe was a very remarkable Example of. And ſure I am that her care of good Works reflects no little honour upon her Name and Memory. This is another Badge of Honour preferrable to that of Titles and ancient Blood:

—Titulis & faſcibus olim
Major habebatur donandi gloria.

This makes us like God himſelf: And her Charity was genuine, and of the right ſtamp: For as it was diffuſive and large, ſo 'twas concealed and far from oſtentation: She would not that one hand ſhould know what the other did. And as when *Dorcas* was dead, the Widows ſtood by and wept, and ſhewed *Peter* the Coats and Garments which ſhe had made (*and had given them*) v. *Verſ. Syriac.* whiles ſhe was with them (*Act.* 9. 39.) So, I make no doubt, the caſe is now. There are many not far from me, who have received the effects of her bounty and beneficence, though ſome of them may not have known the Hand from whence their Relief came.

Nor muſt I forget her Humility neither, the effect of which, as well as of her Charity, appeared in her kindneſs, which ſhe was obſerved to ſhew to her Servants and Dependants, and in her courteous and affable condeſcenſions to the meaneſt and moſt inferior. Sure I am, that this Ornament of a meek and humble ſpirit is in the ſight of God of great price: And 'tis alwayes moſt valuable, when it is found in thoſe of higher Rank and Quality.

For her Wiſdom and Diſcretion, and her great and more then ordinary Prudence, ſhe was a very remarkable Example. For the truth of which, I dare confidently appeal to thoſe Perſons who had the greateſt opportunity of knowing her. And certainly this is a moſt valuable Vertue, and then eſpecially when it is joyned with Humility and Innocence: Our Saviour does require his Followers to be at once both wiſe as Serpents, and alſo innocent as Doves. But then how great a bleſſing this is in a Wife, the wiſe man does ſufficiently teach us: *Houſe and Riches* (ſayes he) *are the Inheritance of Fathers*; i. e. great Eſtates and Fortunes (as we call them) are left us by our Parents; but then he adds, *and a prudent Wife is from the Lord* Prov. 19. 14. Not but that Houſe and Riches are from God too, but not ſo immediately and peculiarly, it ſeems, as a prudent Wife; whoſe Diſcretion and Vertue makes her much more valuable than Rubies, *Prov.* 31. 10.

And her diſpaſſionateneſs and freeneſs from anger may be looked upon as an argument and effect of her Wiſdom: He that knew her many years, never ſaw her in a paroxiſm of anger. This is a paſſion that reſts in the boſom of Fools: *A man of underſtanding is of an excellent ſpirit*, (Prov. 17. 27.) ſo indeed we render the words. But according to the Cethib, or textural reading in the Hebrew, it is thought to import another ſenſe, which our Marginal reading gives it: that is, a man of underſtanding is of a *cool ſpirit*. The wiſe man tells us elſe where, That the *diſcretion of a man deferreth his anger, and it is his glory to paſs over a tranſgreſſion*, Prov. 18. 11.

As for her relative circumſtances of life, briefly thus: She was an affectionate and obedient Wife, a careful and very painful Mother. To her Servants ſhe was

kind,

kind, and ready to give them prudent advice. She was affable and courteous to all.

Her laſt Sickneſs ſhe bore with a mighty patience: She had been long exerciſed with a chronical and troubleſome Diſtemper: She had buried a Child, for whom ſhe had a moſt tender love. She had endured afflictions that were long and ſharp, and yet after all, and not long before her death, ſhe did ſolemnly profeſs her ſubmiſſion to Gods Will, and acquieſcence in his Wiſdom, in theſe very words, or words to this effect, *I thank God* (ſaid ſhe) *I can now lay my hands upon my mouth (and perhaps they may be my laſt words) and ſay, That I never had the leaſt hard thought of God, for any thing he ever did to me or mine.*

I doubt not but I may truly apply to her, what *Soloman* ſaid of his vertuous woman, That *the heart of her Husband did ſafely truſt in her*, (Prov. 31. 11.) That *ſhe did him good and not evil all the daies of her life*, (verſe 12.) That *ſhe ſtretched out her hand to the Poor, and reached forth her hands to the Needy*, (verſ. 20.) That *ſhe opened her Mouth in Wiſdom, and that in her Tongue was the Law of Kindeſs*, (verſ. 26.) That *ſhe looked well to the wayes of her Houſhold, and did not eat the Bread of idleneſs*, (verſ. 27.) And why may I not alſo add, That *her Children may ariſe up and call her bleſſed, and her Husband alſo and praiſe her*, (verſ. 28.) I add no more but what follows, *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain; but a woman that feareth the Lord ſhe ſhall be praiſed*, (verſ. 30.)

Having

Having received a more particular account of this good Lady (after the fore-going Papers were delivered to the Preſs) from a Perſon of Quality, that had an acquaintance with her: I thought good to ſubjoyn it, and ſhall give the Reader ſome account of it in that order in which I received it.

HEr Extraction was Honourable, in a direct line from the Lord of *Haſtings* and *Hoo*, of whoſe Family ſhe was the Heir-General, and the ſole Inheritrix of thoſe ancient Poſſeſſions that remained to the Barony; the Lord, her Anceſtor, being a Perſon of that Renown, that in thoſe fatal Quarrels between the Houſes of *York* and *Lancaſter*; and when thoſe Quarrels were at the height, he was pitched upon to treat and mediate between the two Parties.

This good Lady was known to be of the ſame paciſick ſpirit (as if it had been Hereditary to her) and was never known to lodge any rancour in her Breaſt; nay ſcarce to retain any more of anger, then ſerved to maintain her authority over thoſe which were under her conduct and government; and thoſe indeed never eſcaped ſevere reprehenſion, when any indecent carriage or action called for it. And upon that account ſhe was looked upon as the great ſecurity of her company, that were kept in awe by her preſence. Her charity was ſo great, that ſhe was rarely known to paſs any cenſure upon others, or to aggravate their miſcariages. And where ſhe found any thing of coldneſs of affection, or unkindneſs ariſing between Friends and Relatives, ſhe was alwayes on the healing ſide.

She was of a temper that was reſerved and cloſe,

which

which gave her advantage of a through proſpect into others, without being her ſelf ſo perfectly diſcerned. And as by this means ſhe was more fit to reconcile any difference amongſt her Friends and Relatives, ſo ſhe was ever obſerved notwithſtanding to be ſo juſt in her friendſhip, as never to fail thoſe in any thing whom ſhe judged worthy of it.

She ſtrictly kept her ſelf to her hours in her conſtant retirements to her Cloſet; and though ſhe were much converſant in Books (which became the chief of her delight and recreation) yet would ſhe ſtill begin with the Bible; and it was obſerved of her that ſhe would never ſuffer her ſelf to be ſo far tempted, as to take up any other Book into her hand before it.

She was careful about the Education and Improvement of her Children, and to that purpoſe was furniſhed with great diſcretion and parts: And her numerous family was happy in her, where things were managed with that method and prudence, that her Orders met with that ready and exact Obedience, as prevented the occaſion of exerciſing her paſſion.

Though ſhe were juſtly looked upon as a moſt affectionate Wife, a moſt tender and indulgent Mother, yet ſuch an evenneſs of temper was ſhe poſſeſſed with, as that ſhe rarely diſcovered any thing like fondneſs towards thoſe who had the deepeſt ſhare in her heart and affection.

She was greatly indifferent as to the Pleaſures of this life, and was obſerved not to affect any, ſave in order to her own health that required it. She was very remarkable for her temperance, where ſhe gave a law to her ſelf, as not to exceed the juſt bounds.

Her ſincerity was no leſs obſervable; She was ever at war with all diſſimulation and Hypocriſie, alwaies profeſſing that deteſtation and hatred againſt a lye, that made

made her irreconcilable to the Author of it.

Though ſhe ſometimes affected the converſe of young Company, yet had ſhe ſuch a check upon them, as nothing of levity made up their ſociety; Her own Diſcourſe ſtill tending to grave and ſober advice, which was ever ſeconded by her own example and practice.

Though ſhe made the ſtudy of Religion, and Knowledge of it, much of her buſineſs, wherein ſhe was known to have very great attainments, yet was ſhe ſo far from oſtentation, as ſhe was very ſeldom obſerved to interpoſe her own ſenſe and opinion in matters of controverſie and debate. Her ſole aim being to make her knowledge ſubſervient to her practice; And ſhe would often ſay in her ordinary diſcourſe, that in *matters of Religion, it was better to* be *then to* ſeem.

For her general Behaviour, it was both awful and grave, and yet ſo diſtinguiſhing, that ſhe ever gave that reſpect which was due to all ranks of Perſons, according to their degree and quality, never making the weakneſs of parts, or the meanneſs of condition (for which ſhe had alwayes a pity and compaſſion) the object of her ſcorn and contempt.

God grant us the grace ſo to imitate the example of this good Lady, and of all others who have finiſhed their Chriſtian courſe, that we may at length be partakers of thoſe Joyes that are at Gods right hand for evermore. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria.